

REMARKS OF VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY AT
PRESIDENT'S AWARDS FOR DISTINGUISHED FEDERAL SERVICE CEREMONY,
WASHINGTON, D.C., AUGUST 3, 1967

Thank you Secretary Gardner, Commissioner Macy, Secretary of State Mr. Rusk, Members of the Cabinet, the Award winners, honored public servants, ladies and gentlemen.

This is an occasion that is a very special one for those that are the recipients of the President's Awards for Distinguished Federal Service. As a result, it is a very special occasion for me, for every member of the Cabinet, and, I know, for all of those associated with the Award winners. It's particularly a happy occasion for the families and the special friends of those who today are being appropriately honored.

Some 25 hundred years ago Confucius set forth what he called the "cardinal directions to be attended to by everyone called to the government of nations." One of the most important of those responsibilities, he said, was "the honoring of worthy men."

Well, we are here today to honor worthy men -- six outstanding career employees of the Federal Government.

They are men so creative in imagination, so innovative in action that the President has appropriately termed them "modern pioneers." They are also public servants who have exemplified what Franklin Roosevelt once said was "a passion for anonymity" -- doing their work and doing it brilliantly, conscientiously with great dedication to the public cost and the public welfare, without hope of any special reward.

I salute them as one of their colleagues in Government, for their selfless devotion to public duty.

If there ever was a time we needed public servants who have those qualities of selfless devotion, of patient perseverance, of constant self improvement, it's now -- and thank goodness we take a few moments of our busy day to honor them.

I don't need to tell you that public service in our time does call for pioneering. "More of the same" just isn't enough anymore.

I say this from some experience. I've been in public service for 23 years, in elective office, and some years before that, in appointive offices -- even though I'm still "career conditional" -- and if I have reached any conclusion, it is just this, that the old habits, the old accepted premises and preconceptions must be examined, re-examined, evaluated, and re-evaluated every day.

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Now, this is not to say that we cast them aside with abandon and recklessness, but rather that we take a good look and see if what we are doing is what we ought to be doing in light of the times and demands. This is the tenth time that these Presidential Awards have been conferred. I feel specially privileged today to have the opportunity to be in the ceremony of conferring these Awards. They are not lightly bestowed. They are high honors. With the six that I am honored to present today they come to only 52 in the 10 times of the conferring of the Awards.

To those of you who are the recipients of these high honors, may I say that yours have been contributions of the highest distinction in fields of great present and future consequence for our Nation.

Now first, Mr. Myrl E. Alexander, whose direction of the Federal Bureau of Prisons has earned international recognition in the fields of crime prevention and rehabilitation.

Second, Mr. Arthur E. Hess, who has brought extraordinary energy and uncommon common sense to making Medicare a going concern.

And third, an old friend, Dr. Sherman Kent, whose sophisticated development of the Board of National Estimates has provided invaluable tools for our intelligence community and thus enhanced, of course, our national security.

Fourth, Mr. C. Payne Lucas, and by the way Mr. Lucas, if you could have heard what Jack Vaughn said about you just before I came over here, you would know that you have won not one award, or the recipient of one great honor today, but, indeed, two. Mr. Lucas' contagious enthusiasm and inspiring leadership have lifted the Peace Corps to new heights of acceptance and achievement in the developing countries of Africa.

And fifth, another good friend, Ambassador William J. Porter, who has fulfilled so many difficult and sensitive assignments for his country at home and abroad, including in more recent days his part in unifying the United States civilian aid program in the Republic of Vietnam. He has recently, as you know, been appointed Ambassador to the Republic of Korea. I gave him his first testing on that assignment only recently, and I believe he is more than ever worthy of this high Award by the fact that he endured five days with me.

Sixth, Dr. Carl F. Romney, whose brilliant contributions to the science of seismology have greatly served the building of world peace. And Dr. Romney, may I say, as one who has long been interested in test ban treaties and the capacity to properly supervise them and to provide adequate inspection and control, I feel especially indebted to you.

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Now I am delighted that the families of these men, as I said a little earlier, some of their special friends and some of our ablest Federal civil servants are here today to join me and to join all of us in honoring them.

We salute their past accomplishment with pride, but more importantly we look to their future accomplishment with confidence.

Our Nation and others will be the better for their dedicated service.

I think our Government today is the better because of your service and because today we take time to salute you for your service.

Now it is my pleasure to present the 1967 President's Awards for Distinguished Federal Civilian Service and in so doing to thank you on behalf of President Johnson and the American people.

And with all the midwestern simplicity and sincerity that are in my soul, heart and mind, may I say thank you, thank you for who you are, what you are, and what you have been doing and what you will continue to do for this Republic and, indeed, for this world of ours.

Thank you very much.

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